

Coconino National Forest Plan Revision

Motorized Recreation

Forest-wide Direction

Desired Conditions

- Motorized vehicle use occurs on system roads, trails and areas, except as authorized by permit or for administrative uses. Opportunities exist in appropriate places for responsible motorized recreation with varying experiences for a variety of vehicle classes. Forest visitors enjoy semi-primitive motorized recreation and explore the backcountry in OHVs along designated routes. Noise from motorized vehicles is infrequent, away from areas of higher road and motorized trail density.
- A motorized trail system provides: a variety of trail widths and levels of challenge for a diversity of users, scenery and wildlife viewing, a variety of terrain and conditions, and dispersed camping. Multi-use trails are more common than those available for only one class of vehicle and may interconnect with roads to make loops. Motorized routes are easily identified on the ground and the Motor Vehicle Use Map (MVUM). Single-track trails emphasize solitude from other types of motorized vehicles, to the extent practical, and challenge.
- The boundaries of the Cinder Hills Off-Highway Vehicle Area are clearly delineated and prevent driving off-road, or outside of the designated area. Intrusion on the Sunset Crater National Monument is eliminated. Clear signing and information are provided to off-highway vehicle (OHV) drivers to make clear distinction between driving rules in the Cinder Hills OHV Area and rules that apply to the cinder cones outside of the OHV Area. Connectors provide access to the motorized trails within this area from a number of nearby access points and adjacent motorized trails.
- Adequate signing is provided to advise publics of motorized restrictions. Information kiosks are located at main entryways onto the Forest with pertinent OHV recreation information. Information is provided for OHV recreationists and trail users, including maps and signs that provide road and trail information and explain national forest regulation for such activities as OHV travel, camping, and trail opportunities. Orientation information and interpretation is provided at sites that receive high levels of visitation.
- Resource damage from unauthorized motorized trails is minimal and existing user-created roads and trails are rehabilitated to prevent future access by the public and to mitigate long-term soil and water impacts. Roads and trails are located with minimal impact to cultural sites, soil, water, and wildlife resources. Poorly located roads and trails are redesigned or relocated.

Objectives

- Rehabilitate 20 to 50 miles of user-created routes per year until evidence of non-system trails is minimized Forest-wide.
- Convert to motorized trails 20 miles of roads that are not needed for the road system south and east of Walnut Canyon where the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) setting is suitable for motorized recreation within 10 years of plan approval.

Guidelines

- Off-trail/road use of any kind should be limited on large cinder cones outside of the Cinder Hills OHV Area to prevent loss of vegetative cover and soil erosion.
- Seasonal motorized restrictions should be used to create and maintain quiet areas in cooperation with Arizona Game and Fish Department to preserve primitive hunting experiences.

Standards

- Prohibit motor vehicle use beyond the designated system of roads, trails, and areas, as defined on MVUMs, except for those uses authorized by law, permits, and orders in connection with resource management and public safety.

Management Approach

- Establish long-term partnerships with motorized recreation organizations to help the Forest maintain motorized trails and foster a low-impact conservation ethic.
- Establish interpretive messages and programs with the National Park Service and volunteers from OHV users, including improved signing, information kiosks, and interpretive messaging. Provide signing and information aimed at the following objectives: to prevent riders from becoming lost; to show OHV riding locations; and to identify dangerous and/or closed areas.
- Develop a management plan for the Cinder Hills OHV Area within 3 years of plan approval.

Management Area-Specific Direction

Craters

Guidelines

- Continue motorized travel restrictions similar to the current Forest orders where motorized use occurs on designated open roads and trails only.

Lake Mary Road

Guidelines

- Consider motorized trail corridors in this Management Area (MA). The secondary road system should provide for multiple-use opportunities.

Sedona Oak Creek Ecosystem Area

Desired Conditions

- Most motorized recreation opportunities are within the Savannah and the Schnebly Rim MAs, although opportunities may be available in other management areas.
- Recreation in Neighborwoods, Oak Creek Canyon, Transition and Red Rock is largely non-motorized, except for Casner Powerline Access Road, Broken Arrow, and Soldier Pass.
- Allow four-wheel-drive use along the Casner Powerline Access Road through a special use permit system consistent with: ROS goals for the Transition MA and adjacent Wilderness MA; wildlife objectives; soil protection; and where such use does not interfere with Arizona Public Service (APS) powerline access needs.
- Road maintenance and road improvement activities are limited in order to conserve Semi-primitive Motorized ROS characteristics. Road maintenance is consistent with Management Area direction/ROS objectives.

Guidelines

- A consistent design style should be used for interpretive and information signs and kiosks, but also allow for individual site distinctiveness.
- Vehicle crossings of Dry Creek should be prohibited unless appropriate water quality protection measures can be implemented.
- Vehicular access to Oak Creek should be restricted by measures such as vehicle barriers.
- Roads should be maintained at the lowest standard possible consistent with safety and the desired primitive recreation experience in the Red Cliff MA.